

Have you ever done any sailing, or do you know someone who has? What is the importance of anchoring or tying up a boat correctly? Have you ever witnessed a mishap caused by improper anchoring or mooring?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how equipped do you feel to answer questions about the Bible's origins or to defend the Bible to its detractors?

When was the first time you became aware of challenges to the accuracy or authority of Scripture? How did you respond?

The Bible must be interpreted to be understood correctly – understood in its context, its authorship of a particular passage, its language, and the cultural setting to which it came, to name a few factors. In this challenging task, how do you know when someone's (possibly your own) understanding of Scripture lies within an acceptable realm of interpretation, or when it ventures too far away from the true meaning of the text? (Hint – there is no one right or easy answer to this question.)

- One way to think about this would be to consider how you come to the proper understanding of current written works, such as books or letters.

Critics point to an apparent discrepancy between the accounts in Matthew 28 and Luke 24 of either one or two angels at Jesus' tomb following the resurrection. Some critics say that this shows that the Bible contradicts itself. Do you have an idea of how to explain this situation, and how would you respond to this charge?

Look at John's description of Jesus as the Word in John 1:1-5, 1 John 1:1-4, and Revelation 19:11-16. How is John using "Word" to depict Jesus in each of these passages? How are they similar or different, and what stands out to you?

Read Isaiah chapter 55. This invitation to the hungry and to those who would repent and turn back to God come near the end of a book in which God has pronounced severe judgments to come on Judah and Jerusalem. This chapter is also found just two chapters following the Messianic prophecies of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53.

- What does this chapter reveal about the character of God?
- How are the rain and snow similar to God's word?
- What is the particular purpose in this passage for which God is sending His word – what are the recipients to take confidence in?
- How does this section shape your understanding of God's word today?

Do you ever struggle with a feeling of not really having a hunger for the Word? What are some ways that you can give variety to your times of reading Scripture to keep it fresh and engaging?